

Jacob Julian House
(Oliver P. Morton House)
313 West Main Street
Centerville
Wayne County
Indiana

HABS No. IN-102

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

JACOB JULIAN HOUSE
(Oliver P. Morton House)

HABS No. IN-102

Location: 313 West Main Street (U.S. 40), southeast corner of Willow Grove Road, Centerville, Wayne County, Indiana.

Present Owner: Historic Centerville, Inc., Box 73, Centerville, Indiana.

Present Occupant: James D. Ronald.

Present Use: Residence.

Significance: This late Federal-style town house was the home of Governor Oliver P. Morton, an important Indiana and national figure in the Civil War years.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1847-48.
2. Architect: Not known.
3. Original and subsequent owners: The Julian House is located in the southeast quarter of Section 19, Township 16, Range 14 east. The following references are from the Wayne County Deed records.

1829	Deed of April 29, 1829, recorded in Book T, p. 464. Thomas Commons to Israel Abrahams.
1847	Deed of May 28, 1847, recorded in Book 9, p. 203. Israel Abrahams to William S. T. Morton.
1847	Deed of December 25, 1847, recorded in Book 9, p. 682. William S. T. Morton to Jacob B. Julian, \$530.
1857	Deed of February 10, 1857, recorded in Book 27, p. 336. Jacob B. Julian to Oliver P. Morton, \$5,000.
1863	Deed of April 29, 1863, recorded in Book 31, p. 353. Oliver P. Morton to William A. Peelle.
1919	Deed of October 14, 1919, recorded in Book 150, p. 181. Benjamin M. Peelle to Thomas Ahl.
1947	Deed of August 22, 1947, recorded in Book 220, p. 262. Benjamin, Ralph, Clarrissa, Thomas Ahl and Sarah Ahl Bliss to Frank Martin.

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- 1953 Deed of November 21, 1953, recorded in Book 258, p. 77.
Frank Martin to Benjamin and Lottie Franklin.
- 1956 Deed of September 7, 1956, recorded in Book 275, p. 151
Benjamin Franklin to Hubert and Anna Allen.
- 1956 Deed of September 7, 1956, recorded in Book 275, p. 163
Hubert and Anna Allen to Station Development
Corporation.
- 1957 Deed of April 15, 1957, recorded in Book 278, p. 451.
Station Development Corporation to Pure Oil
Corporation.
- 1960 Deed of March 15, 1960, recorded in Book 295, p. 2.
Pure Oil Corporation to John and Maryls Hand.
- 1961 Deed of February 29, 1961, recorded in Book 299, p. 92.
John and Maryls Hand to Richard and Phyllis Barnard.
- 1971 Deed of August 20, 1971, recorded in Book 356, p. 305.
Richard C. and Phyllis Barnard to Historic
Centerville, Inc.

- 4. Alterations and additions: The exterior of the building is largely intact, except for the windows placed in the west wall in the 1920s. On the interior, much of the original woodwork and ornament has been altered. None of the original mantelpieces survives.

B. Historical Context:

Jacob B. Julian was a prominent local lawyer and politician. He farmed and worked as a blacksmith in his early years, then studied law and was admitted to the bar in 1839. From this date until 1872 when he moved to Indianapolis, he practiced law in Centerville. He was elected to the state legislature in 1846 and re-elected in 1848. From 1863 to 1873 he was president of the First National Bank, Centerville.

Oliver P. Morton, Indiana's Civil War governor, was a politician of national importance. He was born in 1823 near Centerville, and worked as an apothecary's clerk, then as a hatter. During this time he also studied continuously, finally quitting his job and enrolling at the county seminary under Samuel K. Hoshour, then at Miami University. He left before finishing the law course to study law in Centerville. In 1846, he was admitted to the bar, and in 1852 he was appointed circuit judge.

Morton was elected lieutenant governor in 1860, but when his running mate Henry S. Lane was elected to the Senate, Morton became governor. He was an able and energetic war governor, borrowing funds from James Lanier to arm and equip Indiana troops. He ordered the mass arrest of alleged Copperhead Democrats in the southern counties of the state and was responsible for the arrest and conviction of the Northwest Conspiracy members. He resigned before the end of his second term for health reasons, but was elected senator in 1867, a position he held until his death in 1877. He strongly supported the impeachment of Andrew Johnson.

C. Sources of Information:

Foulke, William Dudley. Life of O. P. Morton. Indianapolis, 1899.

Spahr, Walter E. History of Centerville, Indiana. Richmond, Indiana, 1966. pp. 46, 49.

Whallon, Arthur. "Centerville, Indiana, a National Road Town." n.p., n.d.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Information:

1. Architectural character: This late Federal-style house has a three-bay front and a side-hall plan.
2. Condition of fabric: Very good. There have been a number of alterations but the building is in process of restoration.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: Approximately 30'-9" (three-bay front) x 78', two stories, L-shape.
2. Foundations: Roughly laid ashlar with thick mortar joints.
3. Wall construction, finish: Brick laid in common bond, painted a light cream color.
4. Structural system, framing: Brick bearing wall with wood joists and rafters.
5. Porches, stoops: The main entry has stone steps. Other steps are concrete. There is a wood bulkhead giving basement access on the west side.

6. Chimneys: Two interior end chimneys, each end. Brick with corbelled caps.
7. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: The main entrance has a shallowly recessed doorway with squared wood pilasters and a heavy transom. The transom window is a single light and there are stub pilasters on either side matching the lower ones. The door is wood with four molded panels in two tiers, the lower one horizontal. The flush lintel, sill, and the two steps are stone. The woodwork is painted a dark gray.
 - b. Windows and shutters: Windows have six-over-six-light double-hung sash. Flush lintels and projecting sills, both stone. Sash are painted white, while the trim, lintels and sills are painted dark gray on the north and west walls. Other walls have cream lintels, sills, and trim, with white sash.
8. Roof:
 - a. Shape, covering: Gable roof with asphalt shingles.
 - b. Cornice, eaves: The projecting eaves and gables are molded and boxed and have simple molded frieze and barge boards. The cornice returns on the gable ends. Gutter and leaders are metal. All are painted white.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:
 - a. First floor: Side hall, with living and dining rooms on the west. The kitchen is south of the front door and there is another room in the southwest corner. Two storage rooms are in a one-story addition on the south.
 - b. Second floor: There is a study in the northeast corner and two bedrooms on the west. Another bedroom and a bathroom are accessible from the rear of one of the two bedrooms.
2. Stairway: Open well with two unequal flights. The open stringer has graceful ornament. The simple turned balusters support an oval rail which terminates in a volute supported by a cluster of balusters around a similar newel post. A stairway in the southwest storage room leads to the basement.

3. Flooring: Wide wood plank.
 4. Wall and ceiling finish: Plaster except for some wood panelling in the second-floor rear bedroom and bath.
 5. Doorways and doors: The entry, living and dining rooms have symmetrical moldings with corner blocks. Doors have three molded panels in two tiers with lower panel horizontal. Other trim is plain, and all is painted white.
 6. Decorative features and trim: The window trim corresponds to the doors. The living room fireplace has wooden tapered pilasters squared in section with a plain frieze notched out for the brick facing. The hearth is tile. The front is a dark brown walnut.
 7. Hardware: The black box locks have porcelain knobs.
 8. Mechanical equipment: There is a boiler with room radiators. The electrical wiring is concealed.
- D. Site: The building is on a dominant corner site and faces north. The site has trees and on the south and east the site slopes down to both the highway and the street. The neighborhood is residential with some commercial uses along the highway.

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey in cooperation with the Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana. The project was completed in the summer of 1974 under the direction of John Poppeliers, Chief of HABS; and Associate Professor Mort Karp of the University of Arkansas, Project Supervisor; Architect Harry Hunderman (University of Michigan); and student assistant architects Scott Barnard (University of Pennsylvania), Mark Hall (Pennsylvania State University), and Richard Perlmutter (Yale University); and architectural historian Robert Brueggmann (University of Pennsylvania) at the HABS Field Office at Earlham College in Richmond, Indiana. Photographs were taken by HABS staff photographer Jack E. Boucher in January, 1975. The written historical and architectural data were edited by Alison K. Hoagland, HABS Historian, in December, 1984.